

Ariana Costa

From: Rep. Casimiro, Julie A.
Sent: Friday, March 28, 2025 8:15 AM
To: Roberta DiMezza
Subject: Fw: Firearms Bill Concerns

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
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From: Kris Hopkins
Sent: Thursday, March 27, 2025 1:09 PM
To: Rep. Casimiro, Julie A.
Subject: Firearms Bill Concerns
Good afternoon Rep Casimiro,

I wanted to reach out to share a different perspective than you have most likely heard on the recent firearms bill. I most definitely consider myself a Democrat, on some issues moderate and on many, very progressive. I have been a supporter of stricter firearms laws and access for a very long time. I think it's a travesty what has happened to our country because of the lax rules that have been in place for so long. Personally, if it were up to me, I'd be happy to move in the direction Australia did years ago after a mass shooting occurred there. However, I'm a realist and understand this is America and money talks so we won't be seeing much change in the number of firearms in the hands of Americans. There are somewhere around 400 million known firearms in this country. A staggering, almost unbelievable number. Knowing that these weapons can move freely around the country in the trunk of anyone's car, all day, everyday, makes me uncomfortable. TSA, or anyone else for that matter, isn't protecting our states border 24/7.

After watching mass shooting after mass shooting play out on the news for years, something changed in me after the Uvalde incident. I realized we have lost control of this problem as a society. We don't have the courage to make the necessary real change in this country. We can't count on law enforcement to be able to help us in a timely fashion and if they will choose to help when they do arrive. At that point I chose to purchase a handgun and start training with it. Since then I have taken several self defense shooting courses, practiced in mock competitions, attained my concealed carry permit and now carry a firearm legally nearly at all times in public. I train at least once a month and usually am at the range even other week to keep my skills sharp and to try and improve. It was the only logical pathway I could find that would allow me to protect myself and my family if we are put in any of these horrible scenarios we watch play out in the news on a seemingly endless loop.

During the training I've undertaken over the last couple years, I've found myself in a position where I've felt like a mole, the lone progressive in a room full of conservatives. Usually the conversations that occur confirm my suspicions of how they operate and vote but at the end of day they enjoy their community and what they are doing in a safe environment. And from what I can tell, are all conducting themselves legally, safely and trying to improve their skills. I've also noticed that most of them have lots of firearms and pretty much all own some sort of rifle or long gone of the "assault rifle" style. Once I realized how prevalent they were, having one for our home just seemed to be the next step in the process of being able to protect ourselves on an equal playing field. I think it's ridiculous that these weapons were allowed to be so widely available to the public and I never thought I would expect to feel like I had to own one to give myself a fighting chance. But, here I am.

This all leads me to my plea for you today. I think the firearms bill is too restrictive in its current form. I think the focus should be on stricter background checks, mandatory training and qualification, proof of safe storage practices, letters of

recommendation, etc. The way the bill is written, we are making it more difficult for people to be able to protect themselves from the real threats that exist in our country. It also most likely shuts quite a few businesses across the state and turns a group of heavily armed folks even more against their government. Unless all of the other states that we can freely travel to pass similar legislation, we will just be at a disadvantage.

I want a safer state and country for my family to live and thrive in. Removing my ability to responsibly protect them with equal force only hurts me and my family. I never thought I would write a letter to try and dissuade a firearms safety bill but I believe this bill is the wrong way to go about solving our problems. Please, feel free to reach out with any questions. Thanks for your time.

Respectfully,
Kris Hopkins
44 Dillon Ave
North Kingstown
401-741-1756